



Arizona Department of Education
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction John Huppenthal

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CONTACT: Jennifer Liewer
602-542-5072
Jennifer.Liewer@azed.gov

APPLICATION PERIOD FOR EMPOWERMENT SCHOLARSHIP ACCOUNTS IS OPEN

Phoenix, AZ - The Arizona Department of Education's (ADE) Empowerment Scholarship Account Program (ESA) is kicking off its third year serving Arizona families and is currently accepting applications for the 2014-2015 school year.

Originally introduced by legislation in 2011, ESAs quickly expanded from just over 100 students in its first year, to now boasting approximately 750 enrolled families. Offered as another school choice option, the program is the first of its kind in the nation to empower parents to seek alternative, private educational choices selected from a list of approved options using a pre-paid debit card provided to the parents from the state.

Eligible student populations include:

- Children with disabilities,
- Wards of the juvenile court currently in permanently placed foster care
- Adopted children
- Children of parents currently serving in the United States military who are on active duty
- Children attending failing public schools

Estimates in Arizona put an applicant pool of approximately 200,000 Arizona students.

"The ESA Program is the first of its kind around the nation," said Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction John Huppenthal. "As a huge proponent of school choice, innovative programs like this provide parents a unique opportunity to meet the needs of their student."

Students may receive anywhere from \$2,500-\$30,000 from an ESA. On average, disabled children receive \$13,500 while non-disabled children garner anywhere an average of \$5,000. A session law last year capped enrollment in the program at 5,480 students, but also raised the amount of assistance provided by an ESA by an average of \$1,750. ADE conservatively estimates that it will receive a little over 3,000 applications and end with a final enrollment of a little over 2,000 students.

The application process ends on April 1, 2014. For more information about the ESA program please visit www.azed.gov/esa or call (602)364-1969.

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